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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/731,625	12/09/2003	Brian E. Dalton	4391	4716

7590

03/08/2005

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EXAMINER

DAVIS, DANIEL J

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

3731

DATE MAILED: 03/08/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/731,625

Applicant(s)

DALTON, BRIAN E.

Examiner

D. Jacob Davis

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-10 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 9 and 10 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-6 and 8 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 7 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 12/22/03 12/9/03.
- ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____.
- ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- ☐ Other: ____.

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

Restriction to one of the following inventions is required under 35 U.S.C. 121:

- I. Claims 1-8, drawn to a fixation assembly, classified in class 606, subclass 70.
- II. Claims 9-10, drawn to a method of use, classified in class 606, subclass 61.

The inventions are distinct, each from the other because of the following reasons:

Inventions Group I and Group II are related as apparatus and apparatus for its practice. The inventions are distinct if it can be shown that either: (1) the process as claimed can be practiced by another materially different apparatus or by hand, or (2) the apparatus as claimed can be used to practice another and materially different process. (MPEP § 806.05(e)). In this case the device may perform a materially different process. For example, the bushing may be placed over the head of the screw, the screw shaft not passing through the bushing.

Because these inventions are distinct for the reasons given above and have acquired a separate status in the art as shown by their different classification, restriction for examination purposes as indicated is proper.

During a telephone conversation with Ellen Fielity on March 2, 2005 a provisional election was made without traverse to prosecute the invention of Group I, claims 1-8.

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Affirmation of this election must be made by applicant in replying to this Office action.

Claims 9-10 are withdrawn from further consideration by the examiner, 37

CFR 1.142(b), as being drawn to a non-elected invention.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1-3 are rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S.

Patent No. 5,607,426 to Ralph et al. As illustrated in figure 7, Ralph discloses a bone plate having a through passage, a fastening screw having a frustospherical head and a bushing 132. The bushing comprises upper surfaces 136. The frustospherical head is located within the socket bore. The device further comprises a slot 133 and an access passage. Cam means 142 are threaded and positioned between the through passage and the bushing.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the

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invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 4-6 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,607,426 to Ralph et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,235,033 to Brace et al. Ralph discloses slots in the bushing, but fails to disclose a single slot that extends from the upper surface to the lower surface. Nevertheless, Brace discloses a bushing placed within a bone plate to secure a fastener. The bushing has a slot that extends from the upper to the lower surfaces apparently permitting increased compression, facilitating easier insertion. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify one of the slots to extend from the upper to the lower surfaces to permitting increased compression thus facilitating easier insertion within the small threaded opening.

Claim 8 is rejected under 35 USC 103 being obvious over U.S. Patent No. 5,607,426 to Ralph et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,235,033 to Brace et al. and in further view of U.S. Patent No. 5,129,899 to Small et al. Ralph fails to disclose an arm wherein two socket elements are slidably received over the arm. Nevertheless, Small teaches the use of arms and two sockets (figure 3) wherein the sockets are placed over the arms, permitting changes in fastener location. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the Ralph device to include spaced arms and two slidable sockets permitting changes in fastener location.

Allowable Subject Matter


Claim 7 is objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to D. Jacob Davis whose telephone number is (571) 272-4693. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Anhtuan T. Nguyen can be reached on (571) 272-4963. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

DJD


GLENN K. DAWSON
PRIMARY EXAMINER